

Clowning Comes Naturally for Shayna Dias

Sometimes Shayna Dias cakes on white makeup, dons a carrot orange, sheepish wig, wears two or three pairs of wildly colored socks and actually goes out in public. Of course, she's only clowning around—seriously that is.

Shayna, employee at K mart 7214, Winona, Minnesota, is a clown in her spare time and performs for a myriad of people and causes throughout the year.

"My mother's a clown. I was always interested in joining her group, but didn't have the time with two small children," Shayna says. "But now, I just decided to take the time."

The Winona-based clown club is called the River City Rascals with 26 members. Shayna calls herself Skipper. She thought up this name because Winona is on the Mississippi River and an old steamer-paddlewheel boat sits on the riverfront and Shayna felt a nautical theme was in order.

During the recent National Clown Week, Shayna was chairperson for her town. Her group sponsored an event, "Bowling for Laughs", where children bowled with the clowns. They also visited all the area nursing homes to entertain, went to the library, to the children's story hour, and to area schools.



For Shayna, being a clown is second nature.

"Clowning comes pretty natural. You put on a face and it's like you're a whole different person."

Putting on a face takes time and hours of experimentation in the beginning to find one that is really you.

To apply a clown face, Shayna first applies baby oil to her skin. Then she puts white makeup over that, paints her lips and eyes, and dabs face powder on top to set the makeup. Then she takes a damp sponge and dabs it over her face to open up the pores.

Last year Shayna participated in 54 appearances including parades, visiting nursing homes, hospitals and schools where her group did makeup demonstrations and skits.

Olympic Training Takes Years

Training for the Olympics. John Young's sister, Laurie, can tell you that there are competitions to win, workouts every day, and fine tuning your skills, all done years before the Olympics take place.

John of appliances at K mart 9616, De Rudder, Louisiana, is proud of his sister. She has been competing in the heptathlon, the women's version of the men's decathlon, and is shooting to make the 1988 Olympic team in this event.

The heptathlon consists of seven events: jumping hurdles, shot putting, high jump, 200 meter run, long jump, javelin and an 800 meter run. The events are spread out over two days.

"I had never even heard of the heptathlon until last year when my coach suggested that I try it," says Laurie. "I've been running track since the eighth grade. I had already competed in four of the seven events that are in the heptathlon, so I was pretty familiar with what I would be doing."

Laurie is ranked fourth in the state and has been only competing in the heptathlon this past year. She has been to five competitions and holds the state composite high school record in high jump with a 5-8 record.

Recently, she competed in the National Sports Festival held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she placed 12th out of a field of 21.

"It was really unexpected," Laurie says. "I was shooting for the nationals and this was just kind of dropped in my lap."

At the sports festival, only the top two competitors are invited from each state. The two women who were first invited decided to attend other meets. This left the position open for Laurie.

Laurie spent a week at an Olympic developing camp in August. "I'm working towards the 1988 Olympics, but I'm fairly confident that I could make the trials this year," Laurie says. "But I don't really think that the team can make it."

At Northeast Louisiana University, Laurie is a junior and majoring in radio and TV management.

"I should graduate in 1985. I know that seems a long way off but after that I would like to work for two years and train some. Then the year before the Olympics, I would like to go somewhere to train for the entire year and do nothing else. That's why I want to work for two years, to save up some money."

Laurie has observed that the best-trained women at recent meets seem to be from California. She might be cycling as a training ground for her Olympic strategy.